

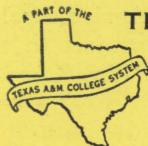
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Family Food

Marketing Practices



THE AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE OF TEXAS
TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
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Summary

Homemakers in 1,314 families from 23 urban communities and 12 rural counties in Texas were asked about their grocery buying habits. This study was conducted in the spring of 1958 to determine family food selection patterns in Texas and factors influencing the purchase of foods.

Homemakers have the major responsibility to purchase food for their families, but almost one-third reported their husbands cooperate in this home-making responsibility.

Homemakers shop from prepared lists, but 60 percent buy additional foods on impulse. Impulse buying is controlled by the amount of spendable income and special diet or health reasons.

Grocery store newspaper advertisements are important to the food shopper, for specials and as a guide in making weekly grocery lists.

Most homemakers do not report a positive effect on their grocery buying by newspaper product advertisements of individual food items.

Most homemakers shop once weekly for the major portion of the family's food, but return to the store two or three times a week for fresh foods.

Approximately 40 percent of the homemakers buy most of their foods from a locally owned grocery. District and national chains service approximately 50 percent. More rural than urban homemakers buy at locally owned groceries.

Sixty-one percent of the homemakers reported they learned to shop for groceries after they married. Forty-one percent said it was on "trial and error" and 18 percent followed the examples of their mothers. Less than 1 percent were uncertain as to whether they know how to grocery shop.

Only 16 percent of the homemakers in the study had had any formal training in food buying. Twenty-eight percent said they would be interested in a food buying program or class. Of this group, 74 percent would prefer to have the class on television.

"Limited time" was mentioned most often by homemakers for lack of interest in classes on food buying and nutrition. This seems to be important in the preference for television classes rather than meetings of classroom type of instruction.

Six percent of the homemakers belonged to some type of organization or club which gave information about food. Sixty-three percent of this group would be interested in local meetings that gave information on food buying or nutrition.

Educational programs developed through weekly grocery store advertisements, store displays and television might be effective if they were slanted toward budget control and appetite appeal. Homemakers with children are the most interested in "what is good for my family." Other than this they indicate no standards for evaluating the effectiveness of their food purchasing practices. Older homemakers feel their responsibility to their children has been completed and are not seeking new ideas and new knowledge with as much interest as previously. Most feel that what they have been doing is satisfactory, that they now can relax their vigilance and that they and their husbands will still be "all right."

Beneficial marketing programs for the producer, distributor and retailer, as well as the homemaker, may be developed by recognition of the homemaker's present attitudes toward food buying. Television may be the most effective medium for reaching a larger audience, but some educational programs might be developed through grocery store advertisements and store displays.

Acknowledgment

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Family Food Marketing Practices

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Food marketing, preparation and service are important to the homemaker. Retailers, distributors, producers, teachers and community leaders are interested in what the homemaker does, what she would like to do and what experiences influence her behavior. Homemakers in 1,314 families from 23 urban communities and 12 rural counties in Texas, Figure 1, were asked in the spring of 1958 about their grocery buying habits. The purpose of the study was to determine present family food selection patterns within the State and factors influencing the purchase of foods. Sample data obtained from these homemakers were checked against 1950 census data and found to be representative of the State's population, Table 1. In the analysis of these data, six characteristics were considered. These were urbanization, race, education and age of the homemaker, occupation of the family head and family income. The factors considered in each of these groups are given in Table 2.

Family Food Buyer

Ninety-one percent of the homemakers in these families did the family grocery shopping, Figure 2. In 4 percent of the families the husbands did the shopping and in 5 percent some other person or combination of family members did the grocery shopping. In many of those families where the homemaker took the major responsibility, other family members made certain suggestions about the grocery shopping. Two-thirds of the homemakers made all of the decisions, but in the other third, 29 percent of the husbands had an important part in selecting the family foods. Among these families, 5 percent of the husbands selected the meats, 13 percent added to the homemaker's list for all foods and 11 percent cooperated with the homemaker with no difference given in the amount of responsibility of each, Figure 2. No attempt was made to determine the husband's training for grocery shopping. Since such classes usually are not available to boys and men, probably he has less formal training for grocery shopping than the homemaker.

Other family members have a smaller part in the family grocery shopping. Children find items

they like and influence the mother to buy them. When the daughter is responsible for the meals, she selects the foods. In a few families, the mother of the wife or husband was responsible for the grocery shopping. Other families had cooks who planned the meals and bought the family food. Less than 8 percent of the 1,314 families reported decisions made by these other family and non-family members.

Among Latin-Americans a slightly higher percentage than of the Anglo-American or Negro homemakers was responsible for the grocery shopping; but there was no difference between the Anglo-American and Negro groups. Urbanization was not important. The greatest differences were by age, income and occupation groups. Homemakers who are 60 to 69, 12 percent, or 70 and over, 16 percent, are less likely to do the family grocery shopping than are younger homemakers. This compares with the report by 22 percent of the homemakers, whose husbands have retired, that some other person did the grocery shopping. Also, among homemakers with incomes of \$2,000 or less and homemakers with eighth-grade-or-under education, 12 to 13 percent reported that someone else did the family

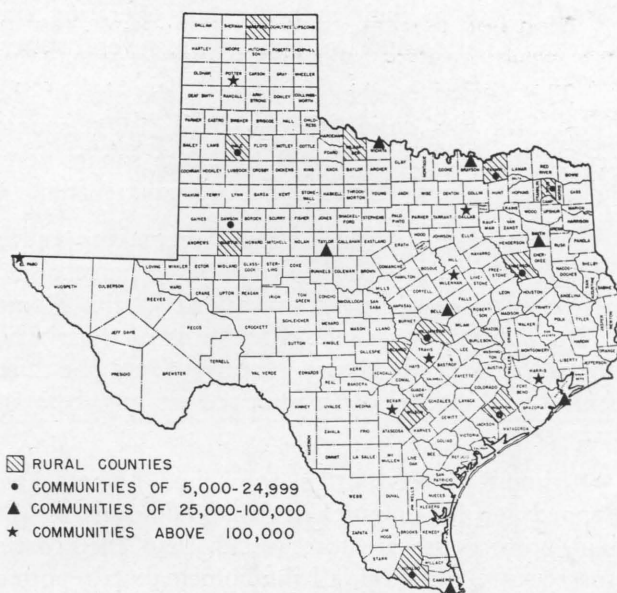


Figure 1. Counties and urban communities where data were collected.

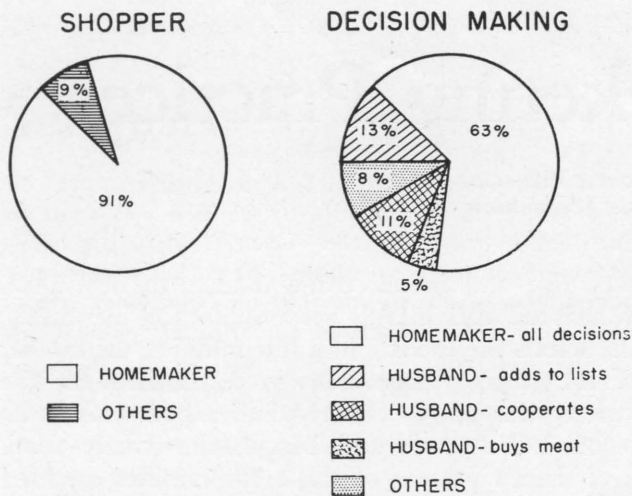


Figure 2. The family food shopper and percentage of people making decisions about family food.

grocery shopping. In other groups within these classifications, 8 percent or fewer homemakers reported that someone else did the family grocery shopping.

Shopping Practices

Type of Store

The homemakers were asked two questions about the store where they bought most of their groceries. The first concerned ownership of the store. Was it a locally owned grocery, single operation; a community chain, more than one operating in a community; a district chain, or a national chain? District chains were defined as operating in more than one city in their area but not operating out of Texas. National chains operated in several states.

The second question concerned the size of the store. Size was designated as small, 1,000 square feet or less; medium, 1,000 to 2,000 square feet; and supermarkets, more than 2,000 square feet.

Thirty-seven percent of the homemakers traded regularly at a locally owned grocery; 47 percent said they shopped at a district or national chain, Figure 3. Rural families accounted for most of those who shopped at a locally owned grocery. Only one-third of the rural homemakers shopped at any type of chain store.

Almost three-fourths of the homemakers shopped for fill-in purchases and additions to the main grocery list at stores other than their main grocery store, although all the homemakers reported there was one store where they bought most of their foods. Sixty-two percent shopped at supermarkets.

Latin-Americans did not shop from store to store as much as the other two races did. Only 40 percent traded at more than one store. Homemakers in the lower income and lower educational groups did not shop around as much as the other homemakers.

Urban Anglo-American homemakers, in the higher educational groups, in professional or clerical occupation groups with \$4,000 or more income and in the younger age groups were more likely to trade at the chain stores. Homemakers trading at supermarkets were most often in the same classification groups as those trading at chain stores.

Frequency of Purchases

Most homemakers, 72 percent, shop once weekly for their major grocery supplies, Table 1. In the occupational classification, among the seven

TABLE 1. COMPARISON OF SAMPLE DATA WITH STATE CENSUS DATA

Item	Sample data		State data	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Race				
Anglo-American	1,089	82.8	6,726,534	87.2
Latin-American	89	7.0		
Negro	136	10.2		
Urbanization				
Urban	825	62.8	4,838,060	62.7
Rural farm	346	26.3	1,549,950	20.1
Rural nonfarm	143	10.9	1,326,225	17.2
Age of male head				
Under 40	466	35.00	1,201,609	50.00
40-59	488	37.00	840,944	35.00
60 and over	205	16.00	370,867	15.00
No male head	155	12.00		
Age of homemaker				
Under 40	590	45.00	2,449,711	50.00
40-59	492	38.00	825,377	34.00
60 and over	215	16.00	395,725	16.00
No report	17	1.00		
Education of male head				
8th grade or less	359	27.00	1,028,495	49.00
1 to 3-year high school	200	15.00	402,730	19.00
High school graduate	335	26.00	285,845	14.00
Some college	122	9.00	165,215	8.00
College graduate	125	10.00	138,465	7.00
No report	173	13.00	60,005	3.00
Education of homemaker				
8th grade or less	367	28.00	949,981	45.00
1 to 3-year high school	259	20.00	471,510	22.00
High school graduate	425	32.00	375,760	18.00
Some college	139	10.50	79,500	8.00
College graduate	91	7.00	115,900	5.00
No report	33	2.50	39,350	2.00

TABLE 2. FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS USED IN ANALYSIS OF DATA

Urbanization	Urban Rural farm Rural nonfarm
Race	Anglo-American Negro Latin-American
Education of homemaker	8th and under 9th through 11th High school graduate Some after high school College graduate
Age of homemaker	Under 30 30 - 39 40 - 49 50 - 59 60 - 69 70 and over
Occupation of male head	Professional Clerical and sales Farmer Crafts and operative Service Labor Retired
Income	Less than \$2,000 \$2,000 - 3,999 4,000 - 5,999 6,000 - 7,999 8,000 and over

shopped for the major grocery supply once a week. In this group, only 57 percent shopped once a week, and 26 percent shopped bimonthly. In the other six occupational groups, the percentage shopping bimonthly ranged from 9 to 13 percent.

The homemakers buy fill-in purchases two or more times a week. These purchases are most often bread and milk or combinations of fresh foods. Low-income families, less than \$2,000, were more likely to buy staples as well as fresh foods between regular shopping periods. Twenty-one percent of the families in this group reported fill-in purchases of staples and fresh foods. These families were more likely to live in rural areas and to be farmers and laborers. Urban families were more likely to shop for fill-ins three or more times weekly than were rural families. Clerical workers, high school graduates with incomes between \$4,000 and \$5,999 and homemakers between 30 and 50 years of age were likely to make fill-in purchases three or more times weekly. There was no apparent difference among the races.

Preparation for Marketing

The homemaker was asked about her preparation for grocery marketing to determine how she made her decisions. Seventy-one percent made a

groups which were analyzed, only service workers showed any difference in the percentage who

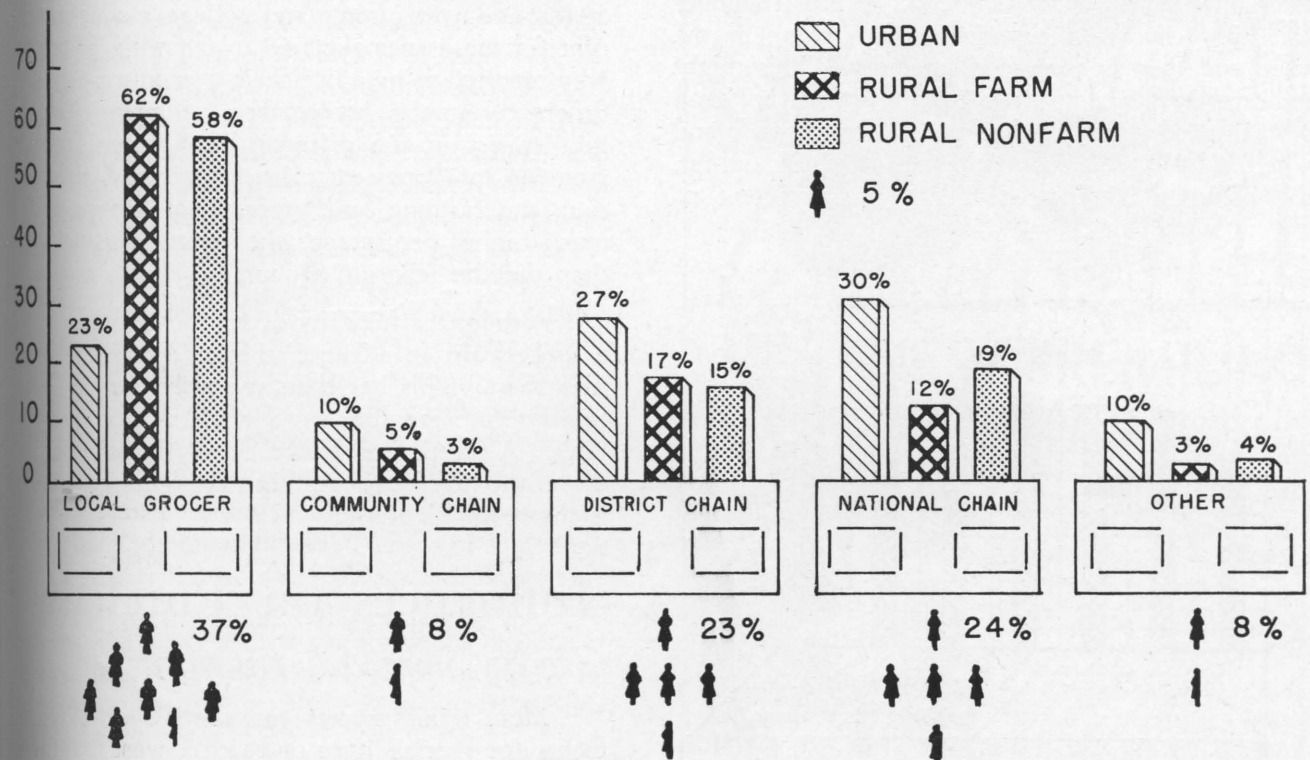


Figure 3. Type of grocery store used by homemakers when purchasing major part of family groceries, by urbanization and percentage of all homemakers who shop at each type of store.

TABLE 3. GROCERY PRACTICES OF THE HOMEMAKER COMPARED BY URBANIZATION AND RACE, HOW OFTEN SHE SHOPS AND WHAT SHE BUYS AS FILL-INS

Shopping practice	Urban	Rural farm	Rural nonfarm	Anglo-American	Negro	Latin American	All families
Shops for major part of food supply							
Once a week	71	75	72	73	60	82	72
2 or 3 times a week	9	7	9	9	7	3	9
Bimonthly	12	11	9	11	19	8	12
Monthly	4	4	6	3	11	1	4
Shop for fill-ins							
Daily	23	9	14	18	20	15	18
2 times a week	35	39	39	36	42	40	37
3 times a week	22	12	13	18	16	24	18
Once a week	12	24	20	17	13	10	16
Other or no answer	8	15	13	10	8	9	10
Buy as fill-ins							
Bread	11	16	9	11	18	11	12
Milk	6	4	6	6	6	3	5
Bread and milk	28	10	16	23	15	17	22
Meat, milk and eggs	5	5	6	4	12	4	5
Bread, meat, milk and eggs	14	6	12	10	14	28	11
Combination of fresh foods	23	22	18	23	16	20	22
Combination of staples and fresh food	5	21	21	11	11	6	11
No answer	7	15	12	10	7	10	9

list before going to the grocery store. Those, who occasionally shopped without a list, plus those who always shopped without a list, reported how they did their shopping. The influence of the family is reflected most strongly in these replies. A typical reply was, "I buy what looks good, what my family likes and plan my meals as I shop." A small number said they checked the pantry before going to the store and then bought from memory. This might indicate they tried to keep certain articles on hand or they were accustomed to using certain foods and when these were low on the pantry shelf, or out, the homemaker replaced them. Four percent of

the shoppers without a list checked weekly grocery specials and bought from these; another 3 percent bought just what was "needed" at the moment.

The largest percentage of homemakers who reported shopping from a grocery list were in the classification groups of Anglo-American, rural farm, \$8,000-and-over income and college graduate. Except for the homemakers 60 to 69, with 79 percent who reported using a list, there was only a 4 percent difference among homemakers shopping from a grocery list in the different age groups, ranging from 68 to 72 percent. In occupational classification, the farming and professional groups had a much higher percentage who reported using a list than did the laboring group.

Although a majority of the homemakers make a grocery list in advance, they add other items as they shop. This has been variously termed "spontaneous" or "impulse" buying and will be discussed later. A comparison in the occupational groups of those who make a list and those who buy on impulse is shown in Figure 4.

Influences on Purchases

Grocery Store Advertisements

Most retail grocers run newspaper advertisements for specials once or twice a week. Often a limited number of items are at "special" prices and the other items are carried at their usual price level.

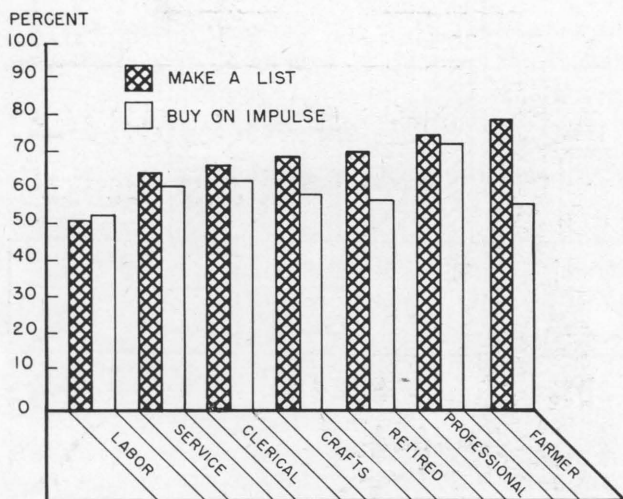


Figure 4. A comparison of percentage of homemakers who use a list for grocery shopping and those who buy on impulse, by occupational classification.

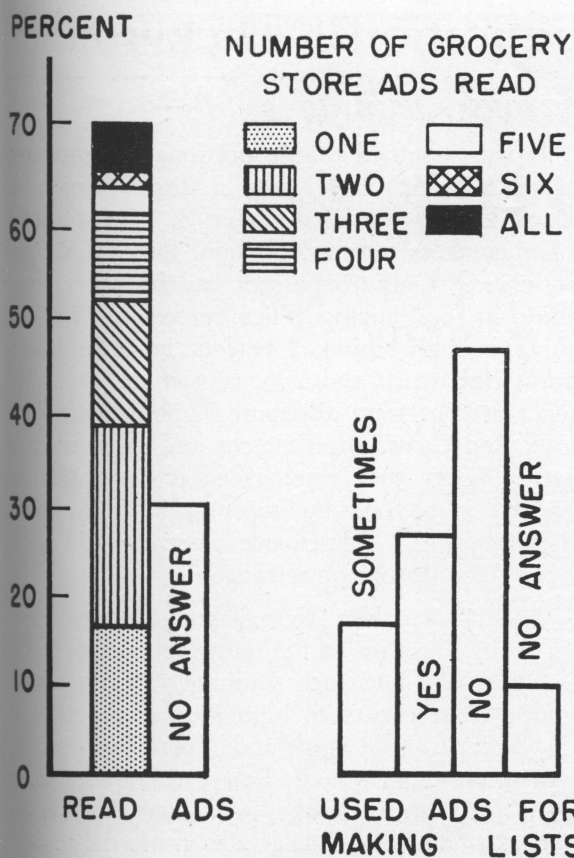


Figure 5. Percentage of homemakers who read grocery store advertisements compared with percentage of homemakers who use these advertisements in preparing weekly food shopping lists.

Homemakers were asked if they read these advertisements regularly, how many they read from different stores and if they used them to prepare a grocery shopping list, Figure 5. Seventy-one percent read one or more grocery advertisements regularly. Two-thirds read the advertisements to learn what was on special for the week. Fifty-seven percent reported they had bought at least one item on special the week preceding the interview. Three-fourths of the homemakers said they usually made an effort to buy things at "special" prices. Fewer homemakers in the 70 and over, rural nonfarm and less-than-\$2000-income groups bought foods on special during the week preceding the interview than in any of the other groups in each classification.

One-fourth of the homemakers always made grocery lists and an additional 17 percent sometimes made a grocery list from the advertisements, making a total of 43 percent, Figure 5. Although most homemakers read grocery store weekly newspaper advertisements, many consider other factors more important in determining what goes into the weekly food shopping list.

The homemakers were shown newspaper advertisements of a specific food that had run in their

local paper during the previous week, Figure 6. Thirty-six percent said this type of advertisement never influenced them to make a purchase and an additional 26 percent reported they seldom made a purchase from this type of advertisement. Only one-third reported that this type of advertisement had any positive effect on their purchases. The homemakers who stated that product advertisements (in which emphasis was placed on the product rather than on the price) never affected their grocery shopping, increased from 29 percent for the \$2,000-to-\$3,999 group to 47 percent in the \$8,000-and-over group. There was a similar difference from the ninth grade to college graduate levels, with an increase from 30 to 45 percent of the homemakers who reported that such advertisements did not affect their grocery shopping.

Impulse Buying

Impulse buying is probably an important part of the homemaker's shopping habits. Homemakers in this study were asked if they had bought anything on impulse during the preceding week. Sixty



Figure 6. Type of product advertisement used in this study.

percent reported they had. To get the homemakers' definition of impulse buying, they were asked how they happened to see the product and what caused them to buy it. Twenty-two percent said they were looking for something else and saw the product; it appealed to them and they purchased it. A special display attracted 10 percent of the shoppers, 9 percent saw it because of its location in the store and an additional 9 percent were attracted by a sale price and advertisement. Only 3 percent reported that they made the purchase because of a demonstration in the store. In each classification—income, age and education of the homemaker, race, urbanization and occupation of the head—the preceding factors had about the same influence on what the homemakers bought on impulse. Within the classifications, Anglo-American, urban and college graduates were more likely to buy on impulse. As the family income increased, the number who reported buying on impulse increased, totaling 68 percent of the homemakers in the \$8,000-and-over group and 59 percent and 46 percent in the groups below \$4,000.

The homemakers were asked how often they bought on impulse. Thirty-two percent did not answer the question and 20 percent said they seldom bought on impulse. Qualifying answers were: "I can't afford to do this." "I make a list and buy from it." "I don't have the money." "Have to stay in line with my budget, buy only necessities." Controlling factors of spendable income and diet or health reasons seemed to inhibit buying without a previous plan for those who reported they seldom or never bought on impulse.

TABLE 4. EDUCATIONAL FACTORS RELATED TO PERCENTAGE OF HOMEMAKERS INTERESTED IN CLASSES IN FOOD BUYING AND NUTRITION

Classes	Number	Percent
Training in food buying		
Had training	206	16
Interested in classes	78	38
Did not have training	1,108	84
Interested in classes	293	27
Training in nutrition		
Had training	333	25
Interested in classes	112	34
Did not have training	981	75
Interested in classes	237	24
Membership in clubs giving information about food buying and nutrition		
Member now	82	6
Interested in classes	52	63
Had belonged in past	235	18
Interested in classes	59	25
Never belonged to such club	1,051	80
Interested in classes	134	13

Educational Background

Previous Training

It was assumed that educational opportunities of various kinds might have a direct relationship to food buying practices, Table 4. Consequently the homemakers were asked about these educational experiences. Only 16 percent had had any formal training in food buying. Ten percent had had the training in high school, 2 percent in home demonstration club work and 2 percent in college. The other 2 percent were distributed among junior high school, Red Cross, adult classes and other types of classes. When they were asked if they would be interested in a food buying program, 28 percent said they would. Twenty-one percent would prefer to have these lessons on television.

The homemakers were asked the same questions about education in the nutritive value of foods. One-fourth had had such training. Fifteen percent attended these classes in high school, 3 percent in home demonstration work and 3 percent in college. Again junior high school, Red Cross classes, adult classes and other groups accounted for the remainder. The homemakers also preferred to have these classes on television.

Club Membership and Interest in Food

Membership in organizations which give information about food contributed to food buying practices. Only 6 percent of the homemakers belong to such organizations, but 18 percent either belong now or had belonged, Table 4. Although the percentage of those who belong to these clubs was small, there was an important difference in these homemakers. Sixty-three percent of this group would be interested in local meetings or classes giving information about food as contrasted with the 24 percent of the present nonclub members who were interested in such classes. Among those club members who had never belonged to such a club, only 13 percent would be interested in an organization giving information about food. The reason given most often for little interest in these clubs was lack of time. Older homemakers felt they no longer needed this information and a third group did not like clubs or were not interested in food. Homemakers who were interested wanted new ideas and ways to "spark-up" their meals. One homemaker reported, "I think my meals get dull at times and I would like to talk with other homemakers to get new ideas."